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From the Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

The final issue of the journal for 2010 is a bumper issue reflecting the increasing volume of research being conducted and carried through to scientific publication by the profession. It is thus appropriate that our Editorial, provided by Associate Editor Professor Caryl Nowson focuses on gaining ethics approval for research, in particular in the practice context. Caryl correctly notes the requirements of our journal to meet standards for reporting on the ethical conduct of research. She draws the distinction between ethical conduct within professional practice and the formal process of gaining ethical approval for research. Importantly, she discusses the difference between quality assurance activity that stays 'in house' and work that moves to the public domain through publication and will require ethics approval. The reference to the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Code for Responsible Research is informative.

A leading group in clinical dietetics research (Ferguson *et al.*) provide the start to the original research papers with a study of nutrition screening practices in Australia, comparing practices between 1995 and 2008. Happily, they report a significant increase in this practice, which no doubt has been helped by the numerous informative publications and development of tools in this domain. Commentary is provided by Charlton, following her Letter to the Editor on this topic in a previous issue. In a more specific context, Carey *et al.* report on a survey of preoperative assessment and other procedures applied by Dietitians in managing patients undergoing major upper gastrointestinal surgery, noting potential scope for improvement. This paper is a reminder that screening is only the first step, and that, particularly in surgical patients, practice protocols need to be fully developed to follow through with nutritional support. It is followed with results of a survey of practices undertaken by Australian Dietitians ($n = 798$) in managing gastro-oesophageal reflux. Nowak and colleagues, concluded that more evidence for the effectiveness of commonly used measures is required. To finish this section, Creaser presents us with a study of the application of the Patient Generated—Subjective Global Assessment (PG-SGA) tool in a rural oncology context, finding high levels of malnutrition, albeit not further influenced by the course of chemotherapy treatment.

Moving to Community and Public Health Nutrition, Giglia provides us with an update of a review previously published in the journal on alcohol and lactation. With a systematic search of databases on scientific publications since 2005, Giglia summarises the effects of alcohol consumption on lactation and characterises the maternal drinker. She refers to available public health policy on alcohol consumption and health during this important stage of infant development. Obesity in pregnancy is another important nutritional issue for this life stage. The following paper reports some very useful data from Szymlek-Gay *et al.* on quantities of foods

consumed by New Zealand children aged 12–24 month old, addressing the need to stay informed on food-related details in supporting the nutritional health of the next generation. This is nicely paired with another contribution from New Zealand by Hopgood and colleagues examining the affordability of nutritious foods for children. This analysis found that (in 2007) providing a nutritionally appropriate diet for children 3–5, 5–10 and 13–14 years demanded about a third of the governments' provisions for low socioeconomic families. These results pointed to a need to make nutritious children's meals more affordable for low-income families. Adding a further dimension to this context, the article by Hebden *et al.* found that on applying the Food Standards Australia New Zealand nutrient profiling tool, there was room for improvement in the marketing of energy dense, nutrient poor foods to children in the region by signatory companies of the Australian Food and Grocery Council's Responsible Marketing to Children Initiative. They called for more standardised activity in this area to better support sound eating habits during childhood. Poor eating habits in childhood can lead to overweight children and then overweight adults who in turn need to lose weight. The final article in the Community and Public Health section reports on the extent of reach of an online weight loss program (SP Health Weight Loss Platform). Neve *et al.* found that web-based weight loss programs can access often 'hard to reach' groups such as men and younger adults and as such are a valuable addition to multiple strategies to help combat obesity in the community.

New sections in the journal on methodology and education/workforce continue to grow. In their study of photographs of Australian food portion sizes Probst and colleagues found there was a real art of establishing truly representative images of foods that would support accurate reporting in a web-based diet assessment tool (DietAdvice). In his viewpoint article, Shrapnel refers to the literature on cohort studies and dietary trials to argue that the concept of dietary energy density has limited use in obesity management. Both these papers provide useful insights into issues of everyday practice that are worth reflecting on. Moving to Dietetics Education, Hughes and Desbrow provide an evaluation of student placements and highlight the variability of this experience. The information provided will be useful in further developing the placement component of professional education particularly in regard to adequate resourcing. The last paper, by Brown and colleagues, is a novel study on recruitment and retention of the Dietetic workforce in rural Australia. The authors found that attention needs to go to building strength in this area by addressing issues of perceived isolation, continuing education and career pathways. It is good to see the articles presented in this issue finishing with conceptual development on the work-related context to which much of the preceding research relates. Complementing this finish, there is also a Letter from Kotsirilos and

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colleagues on the role of the Dietitian in integrative medicine. The continuing education section addresses the contemporary topic of anti-oxidants.

I trust you will enjoy this bumper issue. It will make good reading for the holiday season. Thanks again to all involved in the production of the journal this year. Congratulations to

the authors for seeing their work through to publication and many thanks to the review and publications teams who helped them to get there.

Linda C. Tapsell, PhD, FDAA
Editor